

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

INFO OCT-01 ISO-00 CIAE-00 DODE-00 PM-04 H-01 INR-07

L-03 NSAE-00 NSC-05 PA-01 PRS-01 SP-02 SS-15

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R 161628Z MAY 77

FM AMEMBASSY BRUSSELS

TO SECSTATE WASHDC 9860

INFO AMEMBASSY ANKARA

AMEMBASSY ATHENS

AMEMBASSY BONN

AMEMBASSY COPENHAGEN

AMEMBASSY DUBLIN

AMEMBASSY LISBON

AMEMBASSY LONDON

AMEMBASSY LUXEMBOURG

AMEMBASSY OSLO

AMEMBASSY OTTAWA

AMEMBASSY PARIS

AMEMBASSY REYKJAVIK

AMEMBASSY ROME

AMEMBASSY THE HAGUE

USMISSION EC BRUSSELS

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E.O. 11652: N/A

TAGS: PINT, BE

SUBJECT: FORMATION OF NEW GOVERNMENT: NEGOTIATIONS PROGRESS,
BUT SLOWLY

REF: BRUSSELS 4624

SUMMARY: FOUR-PARTY NEGOTIATIONS TOWARDS THE FORMATION OF
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A NEW BELGIAN GOVERNMENT MADE LIMITED PROGRESS IN THEIR FIRST
WEEK. ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY AND THE TOUGHER COMMUNITY
QUESTIONS ARE STILL TO BE DISCUSSED. PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS,
THE FORMATEUR, CLEARLY HAS AT LEAST A COUPLE OF WEEKS STILL
OF HARD-BARGAINING AHHEAD. END SUMMARY.

1. THE FIRST WEEK OF NEGOTIATIONS AMONG FOUR PARTIES-

SOCIAL CHRISTIAN, SOCIALIST, VOLKSUNIE, AND THE FRANCO-PHONE DEMOCRATIC FRONT (REFTEL), REGISTERED LIMITED PROGRESS, LEAVING THE PARTIES STILL WELL SHORT OF A FULL ACCORD WHICH WOULD GIVE BELGIUM A NEW GOVERNING COALITION, THE TALKS FOLLOWED PRIME MINISTER TINDEMANS' AGENDA: DISCUSSION OF THE EASIER COMMUNITY ISSUES FIRST, THEN ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL POLICY AND, FINALLY, THE SENSITIVE QUESTION OF THE LIMITS OF BRUSSELS IN A FEDERAL BELGIUM.

2. THE 13-MAN NEGOTIATING TEAM WORKED PART WAY THROUGH ITEM ONE LAST WEEK, REPORTEDLY REACHING AGREEMENT ON POWERS TO BE CONFERRED ON THE REGIONS AND ON THE COMPOSITION OF REGIONAL ASSEMBLIES AND EXECUTIVES. THE HARD ISSUES OF THE METHOD OF FINANCING REGIONAL INSTITUTIONS, THE NATURE OF REGIONAL ADMINISTRATIVE SERVICES, AND THE CONTENT OF THE NECESSARY CONSTITUTIONAL AMENDMENTS REMAIN.

3. IN A STATEMENT FRIDAY EVENING, FORMATEUR TINDEMANS SAID HE HOPED ITEM ONE COULD BE WOUND UP MAY 16 AND THAT ECONOMIC AND SOCIAL QUESTIONS COULD BE TACKLED MAY 17.

3. COMMENT: ALTHOUGH NEGOTIATORS ARE PUBLICLY SANGUINE, IT IS CLEAR THAT THE MORE DIFFICULT ISSUES ARE STILL TO BE ADDRESSED - EMPLOYMENT AND INFLATION CONTROL, AND THE LIMITS OF BRUSSELS. A WELL-PLACED MEMBER OF TINDEMANS' CABINET IS PRIVATELY SKEPTICAL, DESCRIBING THE QUESTION OF REGIONAL FINANCING AS A MAJOR HURDLE YET TO BE CLEARED. EVEN THE OPTIMUM PROGRESS TINDEMANS STILL HAS AT LEAST A COUPLE OF WEEKS OF HARD WORK BEFORE LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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HE CAN HOPE TO PIECE TOGETHER THE BIG COALITION HE SEEKS. IT IS FAR FROM A SURE THING THAT HE WILL SUCCEED. RENNER

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